

REMENDER • CRAIG • BOYD

DEADLY GLASS



1988 #19

DIE FOR ME PART THREE

The Story So Far...

When homeless orphan San Franciscan teen Marcus Lopez was asked to join Kings Dominion Atelier of the Deadly Arts, a shadowy school specializing in training the next generation of the world's deadliest assassins, he expected trouble wouldn't be far behind. But he had no idea.

Unlike the majority of the alumni, Marcus is not a legacy pledge. As it turns out, these unaffiliated kids cynically referred to as "Rats", have themselves become the final exam for their more privileged classmates. Anyone who kills a Rat passes. Failure is not an option.

Marcus and fellow-rat/occasional lover Petra have broken out of the underground school and have fled into the back alleys of San Francisco, Marcus' home turf.

Still, their chances aren't good, as Marcus' former-roommate-turned-ruthless-strategist Shabnam is using the chaos to rid himself of all competitors at the school, using guile and cunning to send his classmates out to kill and die for him.

Shabnam's deadliest weapon is Viktor, a mountain of Soviet muscle and sinew, who currently has his sights set on one skinny Rat named Billy.

Love, Hate, Blood and Betrayal. It's Freshman Finals at Kings Dominion, and the body count is rising...

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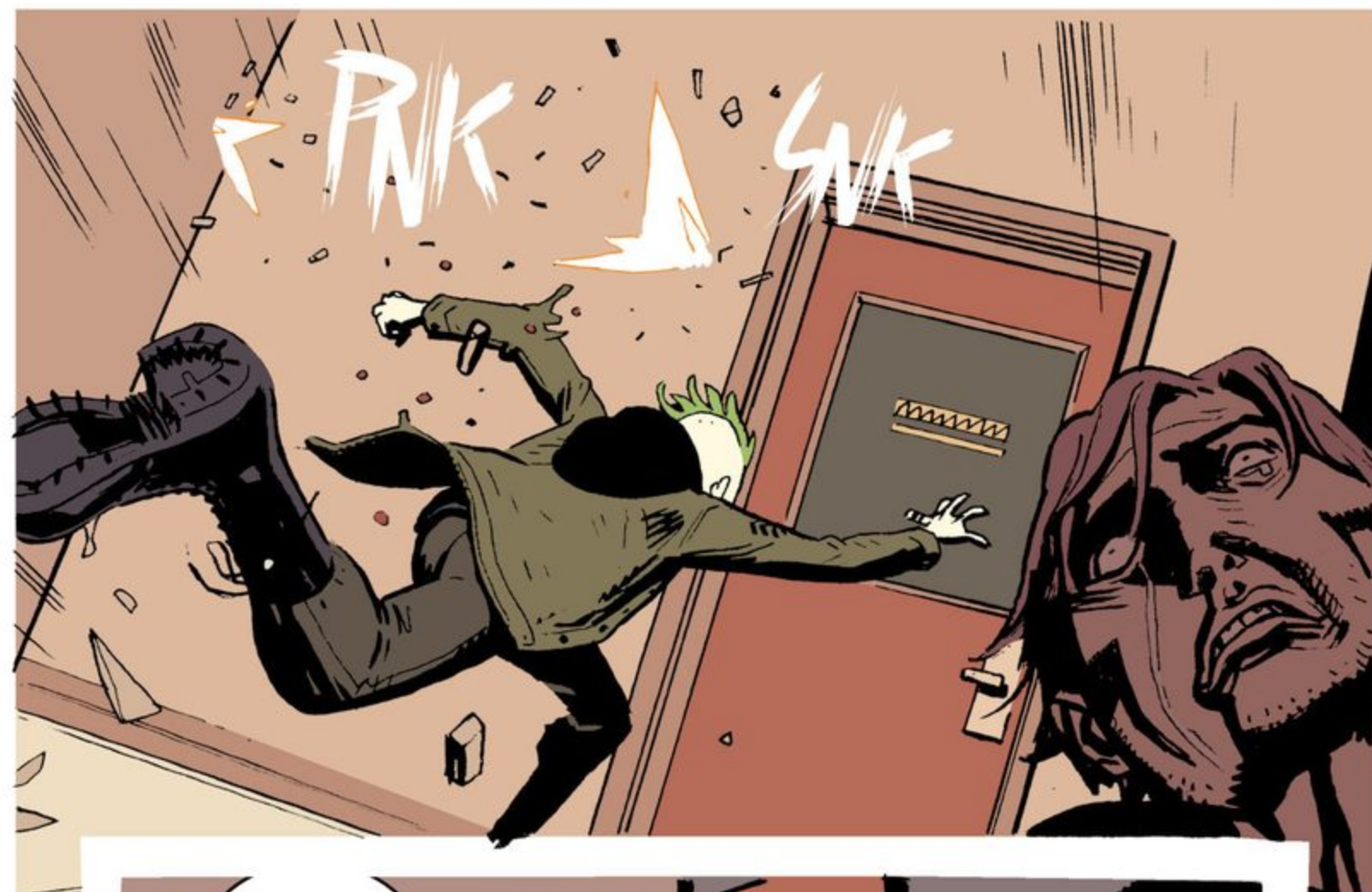
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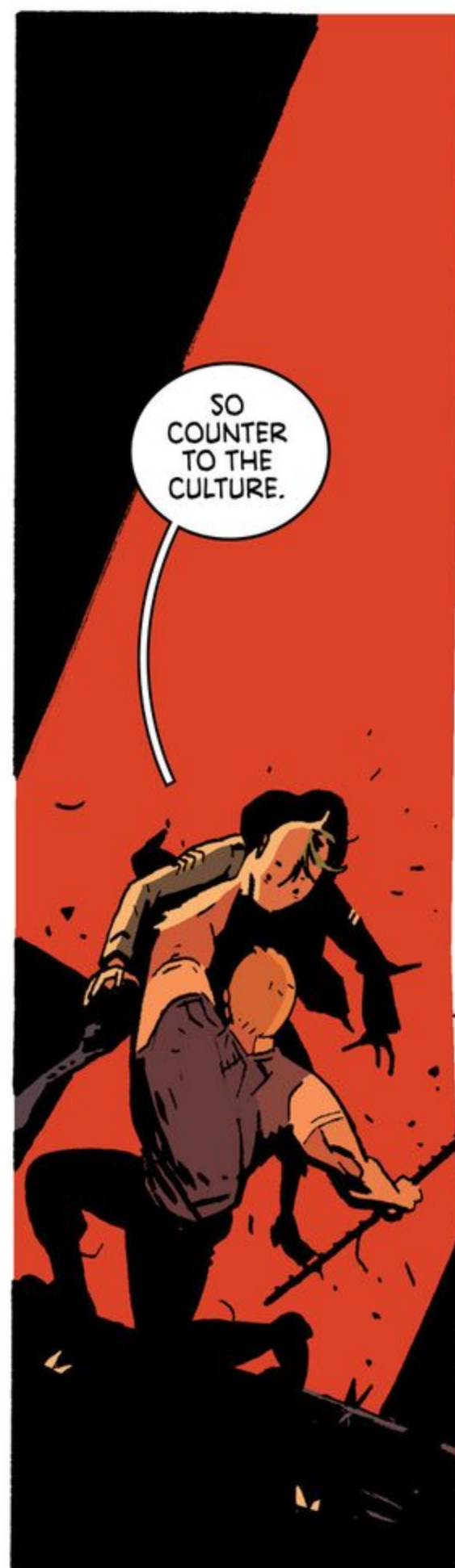






LITTLE
PUNK ROCK
BOY.

CRNK



SO
COUNTER
TO THE
CULTURE.



CRNK

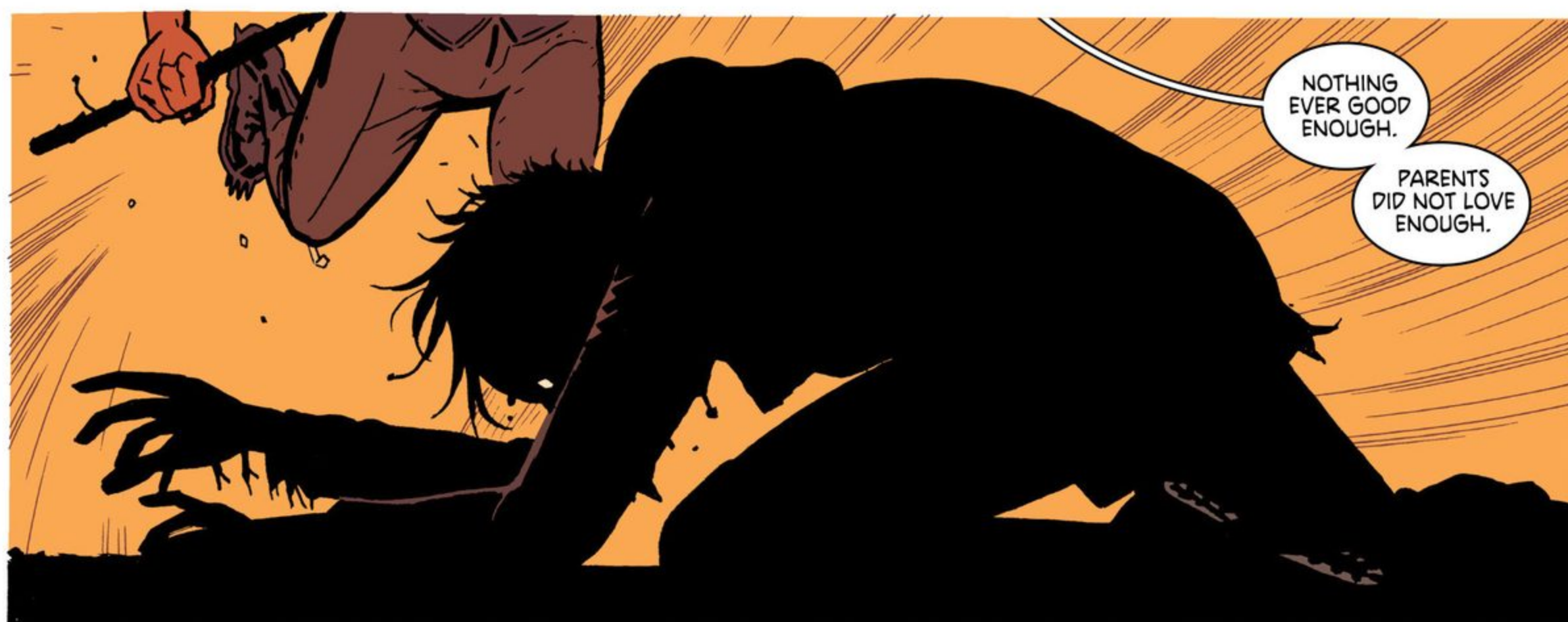


UNAPPRECIATIVE
BABY SPITTING
HIS MILK ON
MOMMY.

CLASSIC
AMERICAN.

CRACK!

Heck



NOTHING
EVER GOOD
ENOUGH.

PARENTS
DID NOT LOVE
ENOUGH.







THEY ARE
BADGES
EARNED
THROUGH
ACTIONS.

THROUGH
BLOOD.



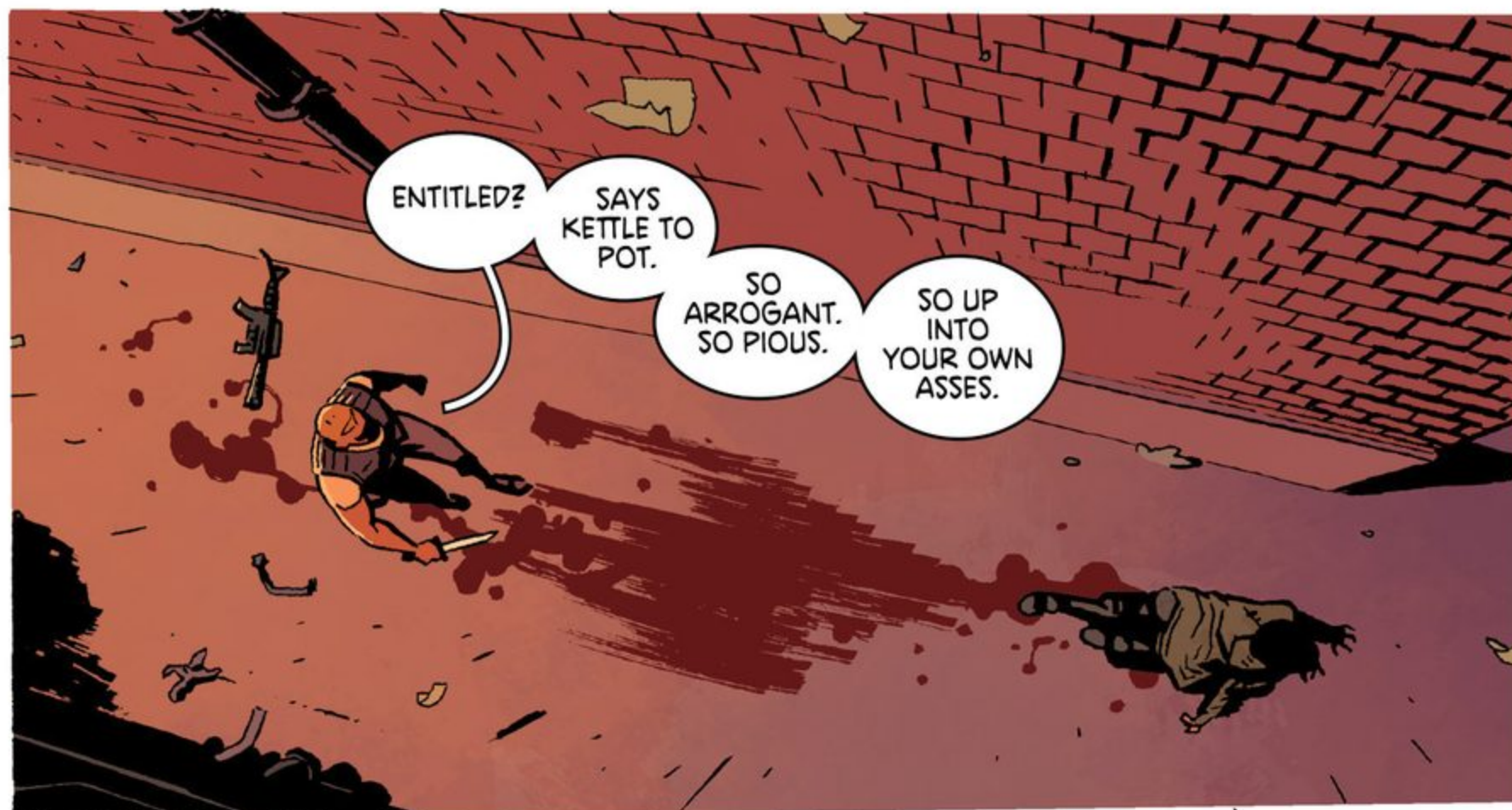
I COME TO SCHOOL
WHERE I SEE YOU
AND CODDLED FRIENDS
SULK.

SO
MISUNDERSTOOD.

SO
OVERLOOKED.

NO
ONE LOVES
ENOUGH.

YOU...
JUST
ANOTHER
ENTITLED
RICH
KID...



ENTITLED?

SAYS
KETTLE TO
POT.

SO
ARROGANT.
SO PIOUS.

SO UP
INTO
YOUR OWN
ASSES.



THINK YOU
KNOW BETTER
THAN EVERYONE.
ALL OF LIFE IS
FOR TO JOKE,
YES?

WHILE
VIKTOR
WORKS,
YOU BREAK
RULES.

DISRESPECT
HEADMASTER.
KILL STUDENTS.
SMOKE
DRUGS.



YOU HAVE
BIG LAUGH
AT THOSE
TAKING STUDIES
SERIOUS.

AND HOW
YOU ARE
REPAID?

GIRLS
OPEN
LEGS.

MAKES
VIKTOR
FURIOUS.



SAD JOKERS
MAKE FUN OF
BIG DUMB **VIKTOR**
BEHIND HIS
BACK, YES?

BUT IN THE
STREET, IT IS
VIKTOR WHO
WINS.

NOT WITH
SNEERS OR
JOKES.

WITH
FATHER'S
KNIFE.



FIRST
TO CUT
THE SKIN.

THEN TINY
AMERICAN
DICK.

THEN
EYES.



WHAT IS
THIS?



GOOD.

YES.

COME
STAB VIKTOR
WITH GLASS.
COME, SEE HOW
WEAK YOU
ARE, STREET
TRASH.



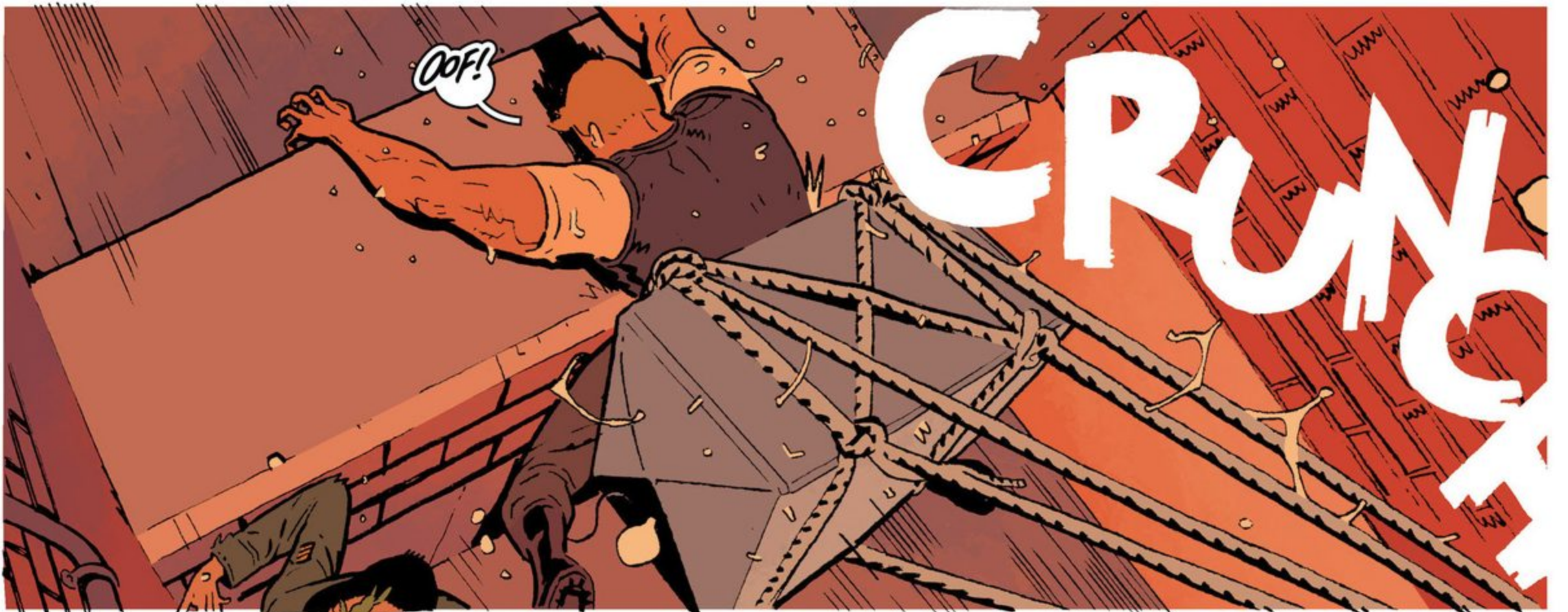
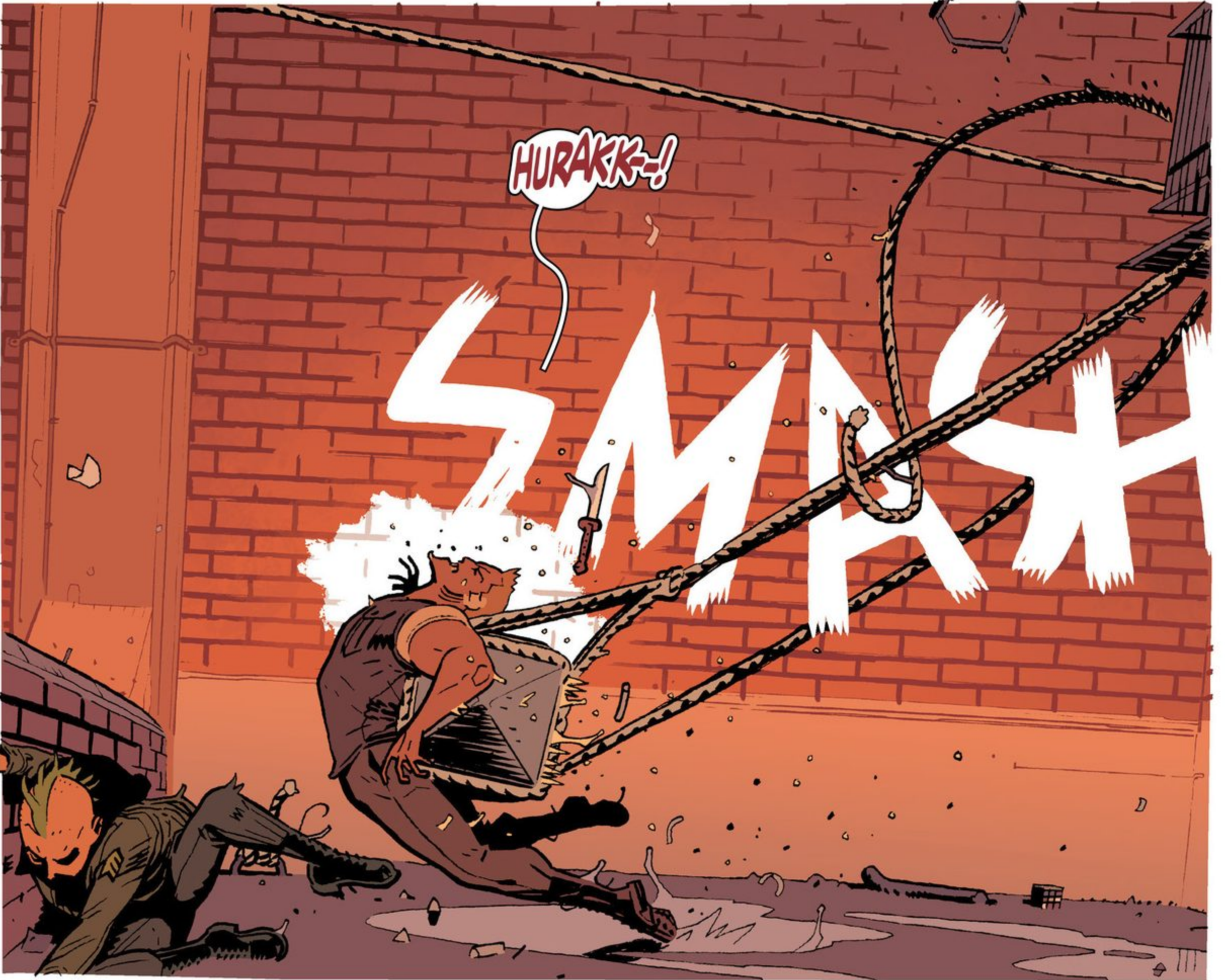
YOU
SHOULD
HAVE
FOLLOWED
RULES.

LIVED
CLEANER.

STUDIED
HARDER.



NOTHING LIKE
LIFE ADVICE
FROM SOMEONE
LIVING ON AN
INHERITANCE.















"...BILLY IS MINE."

A-ARE
YOU
SURE?



YOU
EARNED IT,
SHABBY.

O-O-KAY.



OKAY.

ONE FOOT
IN FRONT
OF THE OTH--
OTH--



OHHHH!









...WHAT
ARE
FRIENDS
FOR?

TO BE
CONTINUED...

DEAD LETTER OFFICE

Betrayal! Who doesn't still sit with some memory of getting stuck in the guts? We all do. The good news is, we'll eventually grow to forget it, mostly because there are always new daggers awaiting our backs. Still, most of us will survive our heartbreaks, whereas some of the cast on Kings Dominion will not.

Dear Rick,

Man, I hope you know what a hero you are. I see you mentioning chemical depression and rough times in the letters page and I just wanna give you a gigantic hug. I have no idea what you're going through but I do know that you manage to channel your pathos into some of the most inspiring human comics I've ever read, on a monthly basis. You bring so much grime and grit to the page and sometimes I can hardly believe the sludge you're taking us through but somehow, there's always light on the other side. That you manage to find that light, and bring other people along with you, in the midst of your own struggles is a serious feat.

Your characters, like you, recognize and own their shit and they do what it takes to move forward. The heroes you write, like you, manage to find that radiant, unflinching integrity that propels them to action even when their backs are against the wall. I truly believe you can't write characters that heroic unless you know that place within yourself. So, thank you for being a hero, and thanks for giving your readers a window into both the lightest and the darkest parts of who you are.

When I'm down - when I've had the shittiest of days - I read your comics. I actually save them for shitty days sometimes. If a new issue of DEADLY CLASS comes out, I'll want to read it right away

because I'm completely hooked, but I wait until I've had a day where I'm struggling a bit. Because that book will show me that grime I'm feeling head on, and I'll dive right into it and cycle through it and come out the other side, and I'll emerge in a different place.

I remember when I first heard that DEADLY CLASS was coming, I thought "*Oh no, that premise is so dark, so violent, even Remender can't sell me on it.*" But I remember I was similarly skeptical about *Uncanny X-Force* when it started, so I gave it a shot. It's my favorite book of all. Thank you for pouring so much of your heart and soul onto the page. It really does help.

Sincerely,
Stefan Wenger

RR - Thanks for this. I'm glad to know reading the books helps you. Identification is important. We're not snowflakes, we're bio computers, and many of us came from the same factory. A long time ago I got over my fear of revealing the truth about that piece of me. I fall into bad depression; it's just a thing I struggle with. I think a fucking ton of us do, (I could look it up but I'm tired) [That's why you have an editor! In 2014, an estimated 15.7 million adults aged 18 or older in the United States had at least one major depressive episode. This number represented 6.7% of all U.S. adults. Source: National Institute of Mental Health. - SG]. I feel like when I'm in it that writing about it helps. What helps more is if I eat healthy, get exercise, spend time with my family, wake up in the morning and stay away from people and places that I do not belong among. If I do that then it lifts. On the upswing these days, which made writing the next two

issues of this book tough. Not much humor to be found. We've reached the big cliff, and someone is going over it.

Hi Rick,

I'm loving DEADLY CLASS. One of the best books out there.

I have a writing question: How can I stop doing stuff that isn't writing? I want to, love to and need to write. Without being too confident, every day I work hard and think about my craft (which, I am sure, is currently terrible). I'm always doing stuff for my stories -- making lists, answering questionnaires, plotting hypotheticals, method-acting voices -- but I can't tell if this stuff is actually making me better. Maybe this saying comes from sports, but it works for me: "*Work Smart, Not Hard.*" It means busting your ass isn't good enough if you're wasting your time. My problem is I simply don't know how to write smart. I without a doubt work hard at stuff which I think helps my writing, but I'm pretty sure I'm not working smart.

If you had this problem before you were a published writer, what did you do? Please answer this question however you like. For example, if you had three hours free on a Tuesday night, what literally would you try to accomplish in that time? Looking back now, what stuff did you do that were merely time killers? Would you recommend rewriting and rewriting the same story, or writing two stories instead? Basically, it boils down to this: Considering how successful you are at your craft, what goals and limitations did you impose to prevent yourself from wasting time?

Thanks,
Jeff

RR - I don't know how to answer exactly. If you're talking about process, I sit down and I write. I take a break, I write some more. I polish over and over again with the time I have.

If you're talking about procrastination, I recently read an article in The Atlantic about why most writers procrastinate. The gist was that many do it because the fear of failing is greater than the fear of missing the deadline. If you don't write, you can't be proven bad and you can't fail. That might be your thing.

But I tell you what: failing is power. Failing fills you with a terrible dread that you have to find the strength to overcome. It offers you the potential to earn a unique self-reliance and strength that nothing can take away. That's when you define who you are. That's what builds character. The more you do it, the less likely anything will stop you. Fuck it. You'll fail. You will. But you might also win one if you sit down and try. The trying and the doing are the thing. We have no time for procrastination.

The simple trick is, in the words of the mighty Murder City Devils, "to get your ass on the floor and shake that ass." Do it enough and you'll eventually stop caring about failure or judgment, thus killing procrastination. That instinct to get back up and keep doing, that's the trick. That's the difference between people who fail, then get up and learn or people who do fuck all while sneering at the people on the floor.

DEADLY CLASS gives me life because it makes me honor the death in my past. It is such a glorious and tragic thing that so many people see themselves in

your characters.

When I was 14, my aunt killed herself in my family home. My face gets hot thinking about it. She was, at that time, my closest relationship. And so, at 14, I started to drink. Hard. I started doing drugs at 15, and it was so easy to hide it. My brother was chronically ill as a kid so my parents would constantly travel out-of-town with him, leaving me at home with a stocked liquor cabinet that I could freely trade to kids from school for basically anything I wanted. Which lead to a non-stop rush of getting fucked up and crying in the shower all night.

I, like so many of your readers, was in that Misfit Club. I was in a large tight-knit group with a nucleus of three very close buds. I always looked older than my age, so my buddies and I would go to bars at 16 and smoke cigarettes while listening to punk bands and drinking Coors Lite.

When I was 18 one of my buds drove into the forest and shot himself in his car. When I was 20 the second of my friends OD'd. There were just two of us left from that original group and the insanity of it all pulled us apart.

Spending a large part of your time in a miasma of sex, booze, and drugs seems so honest and real when you're a teenager. But it's a fallacy. It leads to self-destruction and regret.

Thankfully, I am older now and a joyously married man. It was very difficult to reveal my past to my wife, but that is what started me on the path to forgiveness and personal resurrection. (No more crying in the shower! Mostly!)

Death is real. But so is life. As I turn the gorgeous pages of

DEADLY CLASS, I hope beyond hope that Marcus and friends can find some LIFE by the end of this epic. I hope at least some of them can live full, beautiful lives, because who else will remember those that are lost?

Thank you. Thank you, thank you, thank you.

Jeff F.

RR - I'm touched, Jeff. Thank you for writing in with this. I had a lot of similar experiences, some pretty ugly times. Part of the reason I wanted to do this book was to capture the true ugliness of what I saw and what I was surrounded with. It seemed impossible I was the only one, and I hoped this book would find others like me who could identify and commiserate. It's so much more fulfilling to make a unique and personal book for a dedicated base of readers who truly connect with it then selling a mountain of comics to people who don't.

It sounds like you got out okay and your life is now happy. It's good to know you're out there reading the book.

That's it for now. The next two issues are the big payout. Everything we've set up so far comes to a head. The bad times are here. The bastards are closing in. No one gets out in one piece.

**See you next month,
- Rick**

TRANSMISSIONS FROM A BASEMENT

NO TIME TO WRITE ANYTHING THIS MONTH, SO HERE'S A COMIC RICK DID WITH FAREL DALRYMPLE . . .



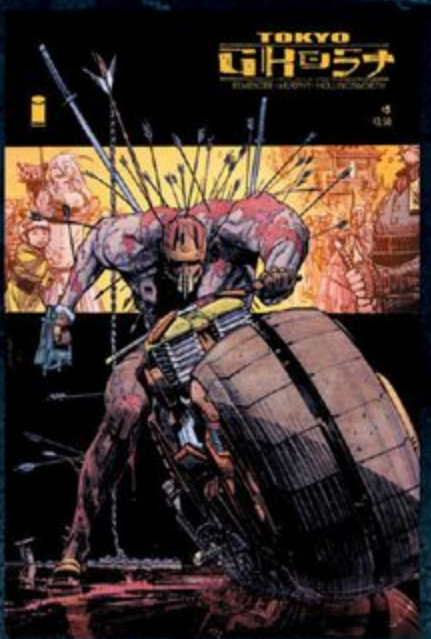
BLACK SCIENCE
ISSUE #20



DEADLY CLASS
ISSUE #19



LOW
ISSUE #11



TOKYO GHOST
ISSUE #5

OUT
NOW

Here's my dream.



The game is to stay current with what the observer wants.



By Rick Remender and Farel Dalrymple

SEE YOU NEXT MONTH!

NEXT ISSUE

REMENDER • CRAIG • BOYD

DEADLY CLASS

WC
16



1988
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DIE FOR ME
PART FOUR





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